

MINUTES
City Council Meeting
Monday, July 1, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: Mayor Holder welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening: Mayor Pro-tem George offered the opening prayer and Mayor Holder invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call:

Members: Mayor Holder presided. **Council Members:** Mayor Pro-tem George, Don Bethune, Bruce Campbell, Rosetta Cody, Bessie Kicklighter and Judy Shuman.

Staff: Brian Johnson, City Manager; Ron Feldner, Deputy City Manager; Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council; James P. Gerard, City Attorney; Ben Brengman, IT Director; Pam Franklin, HR Director; Cory Salley, Finance Director; Charles Draeger, Water Operations Director; David Lyons, Chief of Police; Jimmy Crosby, Fire Chief; Cliff Ducey, Parks & Recreation Director and Benny Googe, Public Works Director.

Employee of the Quarter: City Manager and Recreation Director presented the Employee of the Quarter Certificate to Hiram Hernandez, Maintenance Supervisor, Parks & Recreation Department.

Mayor Holder said City Council held a Pre-Agenda Session prior to tonight's meeting. He said no decisions were made during the Pre-Agenda Session.

Informal Public Comment: Mayor Holder opened the floor to receive informal public comment.

Ms. Louise Baxter, 355 Hawkinsville Road thanked Mayor Holder, Chief Lyons, Councilmember Cody and Councilmember Campbell for attending an appreciation function for her at the Fairlawn Baptist Church.

Councilmember Kicklighter said if I had known about the event I would have been there.

There being no further comments or questions, Mayor Holder closed the informal public comment portion of the meeting.

City Council Minutes: Upon motion by Mayor Pro-tem George, seconded by Councilmember Cody, City Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes dated 6/17/13.

Staff Reports:

City Manager presented the Planning & Economic Development Department's Monthly Status Report.

HR Director presented the Human Resources Department's Monthly Status Report. HR Director said we currently have 101 full-time employees.

Councilmember Kicklighter asked if she could make a motion on hiring.

City Attorney said you would need to make a motion to amend the agenda since the item is not on the agenda.

Councilmember Kicklighter said I will do it at the next meeting.

IT Director presented the Information Technology Department's Monthly Status Report.

Public Works Director presented the Public Works Department's Monthly Status Report. Councilmember Kicklighter asked the Public Works Director how many employees were in the Public Works Department.

Public Works Director said there are ten employees in the Public Works Department.

Councilmember Kicklighter said I believe we had twenty employees in the Public Works Department six years ago.

Parks & Recreation Director presented the Parks & Recreation Monthly Status Report

Councilmember Kicklighter asked the Parks & Recreation Director how many employees were in the Parks & Recreation Department.

Parks & Recreation Director said there are six employees in the Parks & Recreation Department – three maintenance workers and three staff members in the office.

Councilmember Kicklighter said I believe we had five employees in the Parks & Recreation Department six years ago.

City Manager said I have no updates to report to council tonight.

Items for Consideration:

Resolution, Borroughs Street: Mayor Holder read a resolution authorizing the Mayor and Council of Garden City, Georgia, to execute a quitclaim deed for and in consideration of the sum of \$9,150.00, releasing to Roberts Management, Inc., all of the City's right, title, and claim to the unopened portion of Borroughs Street between U.S. Highway 80 and Heidt Avenue.

Upon motion by Councilmember Bethune, seconded by Councilmember Shuman, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the Borroughs Street resolution.

Resolution, Summer City Council Meeting Schedule: Mayor Holder read a resolution to amend the regular meeting schedule of the Garden City Council for the period of August 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013. The regular meeting schedule is amended as follows:

Regularly Scheduled Meeting	August 5, 2013	Canceled
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	August 19, 2013	Affirmed
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	September 2, 2013	Canceled
Regularly Scheduled Meeting	September 16, 2011	Affirmed

Upon motion by Councilmember Shuman, seconded by Councilmember Bethune, City Council voted unanimously to adopt the resolution amending the regular meeting schedule.

Resolution, Ad Valorem Tax Rate: Clerk of Council read a resolution of the Mayor and Council of Garden City, Georgia, to set the ad valorem tax rate at 6.0 mills for fiscal year 2013; and for other purposes.

Councilmember Bethune made a motion to set the ad valorem tax rate for fiscal year 2013 at 4.0 mills, seconded by Councilmember Shuman.

Mayor Holder said I have a motion and second on the floor for 4.0 mills, is there any discussion?

Councilmember Bethune said I would like the City Manager to explain how the 6.0 mills came about.

City Manager said the 6.0 mills came from a discussion by the elected body to propose 6.0 mills and adjust off the 6.0 mills. He said you can always go down, but you can't go up.

Councilmember Kicklighter said I am not voting on any tax rate. I believe our purchased/contracted budget line items can be decreased. We used to not have to hire someone to tell us what to do. We have been followers not leaders. A lot on this council and past councils have not opened their mouths and just went along. We are what we are and I feel many things can be done in regards to cutting the budget before we have to consider implementing a property tax. I feel several departments can be cut, because we are to top heavy.

Councilmember Campbell said I don't feel we need property taxes, because there are other areas in the budget that can be cut. I know it's hard, but some people will have to go.

Mayor Pro-tem George said we were voted in by the citizens to handle the City business. There is no rush to let people go. We value our employees, but we do have some tough decisions on right sizing our government. Council voted for a ten year strategic plan so we could get input from the citizens. We are trying to be transparent and honest as possible. Council has worked very hard to move the City forward and we have to work together to keep property taxes out of here. I am going to expect the business owners to help when we call on them. Also, 15,000 to 20,000 people come through our City every day and I am asking them to help us by taking care of our City when they come through by not littering, etc. For years the City has been putting things off and we have tried to make improvements. People say we over spend on City Hall, but we can't change it so we will have to accept it.

Councilmember Cody said I agree with Mayor Pro-tem George and Councilmember Kicklighter. As far as the employees we may have to downsize in order not to have property taxes.

Councilmember Bethune said any further cuts will reduce services. I am voting in favor of property taxes.

Councilmember Shuman said I want to see things get done in our City. We have cut the budget several times. If we cut any more we will have to reduce services that we all are used to having.

Councilmember Kicklighter said the budget has been cut, unless you look at the fees. To me, the money has just been shifted around on paper.

Mayor Holder said SPLOST is coming up for a vote. My concern is what is going to happen if there is no SPLOST money. Garden City will go belly up. I worry about our employees. In 2008 we had 105 employee and today we have 107. Staffing has not grown and I feel we need to move forward on property taxes and I am voting in favor.

Mayor Holder said I have a motion and a second to set the ad valorem tax rate at 4 mills for fiscal year 2013 and asked for the Clerk of Council to conduct a roll call vote of Council as follows:

Mayor Holder aye, Mayor Pro-tem George opposed, Councilmember Bethune aye, Councilmember Campbell opposed, Councilmember Cody opposed, Councilmember Kicklighter opposed and Councilmember Shuman aye.

Mayor Holder said the motion fails with a vote of four opposed and three in favor.

Adjournment: Mayor Holder made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Bethune to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Transcribed by Rhonda Ferrell-Bowles, Clerk of Council
Adopted by City Council: 7/15/13

